"How to Handle Time": Carmen Sandiego and the Exploits of Planet Express

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"How to Handle Time": Carmen Sandiego and the Exploits of Planet Express

by lefemmerouge

Summary

A crossover between Futurama and the Where on Earth is Carmen Sandiego series. It is a wild crossover time travel adventure, an exciting story bringing characters from two of my favorite shows! Enjoy!

Notes

Revised / updated version of fic posted on Squidge World on Dec. 3, 2023. The revised text, which kept some elements the same, also includes rewrites to entire sections, was added here on 12/15/24, overwritting the previous flawed text.

Comments are welcome and appreciated.

See the end of the work for more notes

Yancy and the Kidnapping

September 21st, 1999 (present-day) - Carmen Sandiego's headquarters.

Carmen grins like a Cheshire Cat. She is clearly up to something, but time will tell what it is. She exclaims, loud enough for anyone to hear, "Those ACME detectives have fooled me for the last time! With this caper, I'll show them who really knows how to...handle time."

Nearby, a red-painted time machine begins powering up. Shaped almost like a hexagonal prism but with a few more sides, it was specially designed by her minions, for her use. It was built to her specifications and style. However, she had personally overseen some aspects, as she didn't always completely trust her underlings. The machine had its coordinates set for January 31, 3008. Soon enough it twirled away and disappeared.

Many years in the future, the final battle between people of Earth and the Nudist Scammers was coming to an end. Bender was about to release the doomsday device, Spheroboom. It had the power to completely obliterate the ship of Nudar, Fleb, and Schlump. It was meant to get rid of these scammers for once.

At that very point, Carmen entered the picture, snatching the device out of his hand. To cover her tracks, she blew up the ship of Nudar, Fleb, and Slump. She took off with the device, disappearing without anyone noticing. Bender thought he saw something, but dismissed it as nothing. To the crew of the Planet Express, everything seemed normal, as they appear to have won the battle. However, this viewpoint was faulty. In fact, time had changed.

Present day - ACME headquarters.

The Chief announced, "Hey, gumshoes! We have reports of activity by Carmen's henchmen at Los Alamos National Laboratory, stealing enriched uranium of some kind." Turning to his star agents, Zack and Ivy, he added, "we'd like to have you check it out. You might get an opportunity to nab Carmen once and for all." He hoped to catch her finally.

Ivy responds, "Player, C5 us to the Los Alamos National Laboratory. We'll stop Carmen cold in her tracks!"

The Chief announces, as their travel commences, "You're going from a sunny, warm San Francisco to one of the premier U.S. laboratories and part of the Department of Energy. Next stop, Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico."

Ivy and Zack are transported to Los Alamos National Laboratory. A pixelated blue circle disappeared into thin air. It reappeared in Los Alamos, with Zack and Ivy shocked by what they saw.

Turning to his sister, Zack said, in typical South Boston brogue, "Man, it looks like the uranium is being loaded into trucks for transport! What's Carmen up to?"

They look up and see Carmen Sandiego. Standing on a rooftop, her red coat and fedora blew in the wind. She turned toward them and cackled. "Hello again, detectives. I've been expecting you, SO glad you could join us!"

Zack yelled back and pointed at her. "You won't get away this time, Carmen!"

He aimed his net-gun at Carmen. He hoped to catch her like he had in the past. As luck would have it, the net missed. It only nabbed an unfortunate loyal VILE employee instead. Carmen jumped down and sprayed a fire extinguisher at the faces of Zack and Ivy. All the while, she declared, "Time is not really on your side." Afterward, she spirited away and jumped into her time machine. It disappeared into thin air.

After brushing the fire retardant off his face, Zack told his sister, "Sis, we almost had her! She always gets away!"

"Well, little bro, at least we got a bunch of henchmen, and foiled her plans."

With a sigh of despair, she added, "Unfortunately, we still don't know Carmen's plan."

September 12, 1787 - Philadelphia, United States

About forty White men were signing the Constitution of the United States, what will later be called the Constitutional Convention, only four days before the Constitution would be finalized. Carmen appeared outside Constitution Hall. She opened the doors, barging in, with the Spheroboom in her right hand.

George Washington, surprised by her presence, stood up. He stood his ground. "Lady, what are you doing here? This is a closed meeting!" He then added, "we are discussing matters of the greatest importance, to found a new nation. No one is allowed in!"

Carmen cackled. She shook her head. "Oh boys, you realize so little about the world around you, coming from your privileged livelihoods. How undemocratic! Time for sweet dreams in the fiery embers of hell!" Putting a gas max on, she sprayed out sleeping gas, causing all the participants to fall into temporary slumber. With that, she stole the unfinished U.S. Constitution and unfinished diaries of James Madison.

"Ciao!" she shouted while activating the Spheroboom. She escaped to her time machine, which was set to the present. An explosion rocked Constitution Hall. George Washington, James Madison, and everyone else in that room, at the time, were horribly maimed. The course of U.S. history was forever altered.

Back in the present, Zack and Ivy noticed the changes. There was a monument to those injured at the Constitutional Convention. September 12th was called "Philadelphia Day," accompanying Constitution Day, celebrated four days later. Puzzled, Ivy asked, "What's Philadelphia Day, Chief?'

"Well, Carmen Sandiego seems to have gone in the past and mucked around again. She stole the draft U.S. Constitution, Madison's diaries, and scuttled the Constitutional Convention on

Constitution Hall. It resulted in a more autocracy, with a President for life, with no term limits. You need to stop her, before she does more damage to history!"

With that, Zack and Ivy were given new ACME Chronoskimmers. This gave them the ability to go back in time.

Zack, bummed out from what has happened, remarked, "Man, we can't let Carmen be a killer of the mood! September 12, 1787, here we come!"

Ivy and Zack are quickly transported to the past. They saw Constitution Hall on fire. They rushed in to save whoever they could. Ivy asked Madison, one of those she saved, to tell them about what happened.

An injured Madison told them the following, "It was a lady in red! She stole my diary and a...constitution. Then she set this place on fire, with a mysterious explosion, injuring all of us."

After hearing this, Zack saw an ordinary man walking upon the streets. He was Yancy Fry. Zack told his sister, "Sis, let's ask this man what he saw...this Madison fellow could be pulling our chain."

Yancy calmly responded to their questions about what happened. He told them, in part, "sir and madam, this was a monster of a fire. I saw a lady in a red coat and hat break into that building." He pointed to Constitution Hall on fire, and added, "then vanish away in some sort of machine...she was a witch I tell you!"

Grumbling about his sexism, Zack and Ivy thanked him for the information. Following this, Ivy used the Chromoskimmer, typing in "September 21, 1999." She then said, "Player, C5 us to ACME headquarters, in the present!"

They were unaware that they had slightly tinkered with the past. After talking with them, Yancy had his foot run over by a runaway stagecoach. He tripped and fell into the Constitutional Hall doorway. He was killed by a falling board. While Zack and Ivy didn't see it, this was an event that would change history in ways they would not have imagined. The Fry family would cease to exist.

May 1st, 3013 - New New York, Widows Walk, Planet Express building

Fry and Leela were enjoying each other's company. They were watching a sunset, when he began to fade away.

Worried and terrified, Fry shouted. "Leela, I don't know what's happening! I can't survive while disappearing, as far as I know."

Leela took this hard. She yelled at the top of her lungs, "Help! My boyfriend is disappearing! Oh no!"

Zoidberg, Amy, Bender, and Prof. Farnsworth quickly ran out to the widows walk. They all

watched in horror. There was nothing they could do to prevent Fry from disappearing in front of their eyes, vanishing from existence.

Fry then said, with deep sorrow, "Goodbye, waking world!" He faded into nothingness. Leela bawled her eyes out.

Leela: "Why did it have to be me? Why couldn't it have been someone else!" They were about to marry. He had recently proposed to her. But now, the wedding is now off.

Her crying continued and this emotional bomb dropped on her. Prof. Farnsworth mused that this event was "very strange." He claimed that nothing like it had happened before, forgetting their previous time travel journeys. However, he was determined to get it right. "Someone has done this and altered the fabric of time. We must stop them. To the Farnsworth-otron!"

Amy asked about the machine. Prof. Farnsworth explained calmly its purpose. "It's a time machine that detects any warps in the spacetime, recognizes the new time signature, and sends you there." It could tell when the warp occurred: September 12, 1787. It was clear to him that someone altered the timeline. "Something happened that wasn't supposed to happen," he told them.

He quickly did an internet search for that day, September 12, 1787, telling everyone that:

"On that day, Constitution Hall, where a select group of men were writing the U.S. Constitution, was light on fire in a mysterious explosion by a woman in a red fedora. But that isn't the time disruption that caused Fry to disappear. That happened 5 minutes later, in what some called a freak accident: Yancy Fry was killed by a board falling from Constitution Hall. According to my records, he was the oldest ancestor of Fry, and with his death, the whole Fry family ceased to exist, not just Fry himself! It is a twisted example of the grandfather paradox showing its true face!"

"So...what can we do Professor?"

"Well, we could go back 5 minutes before this catastrophe and catch the perpetrators that did it."

Prof. Farnsworth, Bender, and Leela jumped into the Farnsworth-otron. They arrived right after Carmen Sandiego left the scene, who they were not aware of yet, even though the Professor did briefly mention her. That was something which they all have forgotten, focusing on the death of Yancy Fry instead

They watched Zack and Ivy appear. Hiding along the side of burning Constitution Hall, Bender, Leela, and Prof. Farnsworth watched Zack and Ivy intently. After they both asked their questions to James Madison, Prof. Farnsworth told Leela and Bender that this was "the moment that the time disruption happened." Pointing to Zack and Ivy, he added, "these people...are part of it."

Before Zack and Ivy could ask Yancy Fry questions, Bender nabbed them. He caught them both with his bending arms, and told them, "You are bending for a bender. Stop trying to kill

my friend!" Ironically, he put them in handcuffs. He was a convicted felon who had been arrested many times before, but that didn't matter now.

In an annoyed tone, Zack exclaimed, "Man, we were just trying to catch Carmen Sandiego!" He added, with derision in his voice, "She's getting away, thanks to you!" Yancy stepped away, fleeing, upon seeing this robotic contraption in front of him. He didn't want to be part of this. In the process, he survived and wasn't killed like before.

Leela angrily responded, "I don't know who Carmen Sandiego is, but you two made my boyfriend disappear from existence! You have some explaining to do for your mucking about in the past! You are coming with us!"

Zack and Ivy were brought in handcuffs to 3013 by Leela, Prof. Farnsworth, and Bender. Ivy whispered to Zack what she often said in situations like this: "I have a bad feeling about this, little bro."

To be continued...

Time Keeps Slipping: Carmen's Devious Plan Manifests Itself

Chapter Summary

Continuing from the previous chapter, this chapter continues the story of ACME agents, Carmen Sandiego, and some of the crew of the Planet Express ship.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

In a voiceover The Chief's voice bellowed. "Where we last left off, Zack and Ivy traveled to 1787 to stop Carmen Sandiego from setting Constitution Hall on fire. But, they got there too late. Her evil deed was done. In an accidental act, they killed a man named Yancy Fry. This led to a spacetime disruption and an alternate timeline. Both Zack and Ivy were kidnapped by a group of people...from the future!"

Planet Express building, New New York, May 1, 3013.

Leela, talking to Zack and Ivy, demands, "Now, what were YOU two doing in 1787?"

Zack responded in stride. "Man, we are from the ACME Detective Agency, in the year 1999. We were trying to stop Carmen Sandiego, the master thief. We almost stopped her in another one of her devious acts before you all ner-do-wells intervened!"

In a retort, Bender added, "you keep mentioning that name, but it...sounds like a story to cover up your murder. So, I'll..."

Prof. Farnsworth cut off Bender. He asked, "Wait, did you time travel to 1787?"

Ivy, responds with a smile on her face. She told the professor: "Yes, we did!" Pointing to a device on the ground, she told him they used the Chronoskimmer. "We are telling you the truth! We didn't mean to kill Yancy, it was an accident...which we are very sorry about."

Bender and Leela walked away. Fry reappeared thanks to the fact that Yancy was not killed by the falling board from Constitution Hall. He entered the room. With a degree of skepticism, he added, "I don't trust either of you and don't know why you mucked around in the past, causing me to disappear from existence. Its nothing ever good! I mean I became my own grandfather and the Prof. here not only killed Eleanor Roosevelt by mistake but he killed his own 'bad' ancestor, David Farnsworth. Luckily, you can't do any more damage in these handcuffs." He then walked away and turned his back.

Prof. Farnsworth, studying the chronoskimmer, says, "I know most of my crew around here are angry at you, but...I trust your story of time travel. I don't think you meant to kill Yancy,

just a honest mistake. Now, tell me about this Carmen Sandiego...I cannot remember that name for the life of me."

"Well, Professor," Zack says with stride, "we can arrange that for you. Player, infoscan Carmen Sandiego and her misdeeds. Bring up everything you can. We can't let anyone else be a killer of the mood!"

Addressing the Professor, the Chief said, "Nice to meet you. So, in our time, 1999, Carmen Sandiego is a master thief. She time traveled several times before, always disrupting the space-time continuum. We stopped her before, but on one of her more recent heists, she stole elephants from Hannibal, and tried to steal the Roman Colosseum, with her time machine powered by a set of rockets. Another time, she mucked about in U.S. history, stealing horseshoes off Paul Revere's horse, moving boats filed with tea from the Boston Harbor, supposed to be hacked apart during in the Boston Tea Party, to Japan, and stole the key from Ben Franklin's lightning experiment, ending all digital technology...as we know it. That's only a small sampling. It's clear that she is up to no good! So, Professor, will you help us track her down?"

Prof. Farnsworth responds with a smile, saying "Why certainly. My new time machine detects any time disruptions. There was one I just found, in September 3008. Now, let's get in the time machine..."

As he said this, there was a flash of light. Carmen Sandiego appeared before them. She tells them, "You won't be able to stop me. I'm into a little acquisition today. Time is the one thing that is in my side, detectives and...friends."

Prof. Farnsworth, Zack, and Ivy looked in disbelief as she disappears with the Planet Express ship. Her henchmen tied up all of them, while finding Fry and Leela, who happened to walk into the room at that moment. They were all transported, tied up and knocked out, through time, to the year 1999. When they woke up, they found themselves at the secret V.I.L.E. training facility in...Mammoth Cave, Kentucky!

With the henchmen moving away, their task completed, Zack turned to Leela and Fry. "I know you don't like us or even trust us, but we have to work together...I don't like anything that ruins the mood, man."

Suddenly, static filled the year. A TV blares: "this just in. The missing founding documents of the UN, NATO, and other organizations have been returned." The announcer continues, adding: "we have one citizen to thank for this deed: Carmen Sandiego. She's a woman with a mission. She heads a newly established foundation called the Sandiego Giving Fund. She is a real model citizen and hero in our trying times!"

Reeling from the news, Ivy exclaimed, "That isn't right! She's a thief who only wants to steal for the thrill of it. Chief, what news do we have on Carmen?"

"We have reports of her henchmen near the U.N. building in New York City. There is a ceremony tomorrow at the U.N. where they are giving her a medal for her achievements, with all the documents she returned on display."

Responding to The Chief's remarks, Leela said, with an air of skepticism, "While I still don't trust either of you, I want to stop this crimson shadow...and any future time disruptions."

Zack then shouted, "Player, C5 us to the UN building in New York City."

In a flash of light, all of them (Fry, Leela, Prof. Farnsworth, Ivy, and Zack) appeared in New York City, just before the ceremony began.

They heard the announcer declare, almost like its an award show, "And the award for the best preserver of cultural heritage in 1999 goes to an outstanding citizen, Carmen Sandiego. While she was once a world-famous thief, now she has shown to have gone on the side of good."

The doors of the U.N. General Assembly burst open. Ivy yelled at the top of her lungs, as the guards pointed their weapons at her, "stop her, she's a thief!"

Carmen, displeased by the interruption, turned to them. "Hello, detectives and friends. Your timing is always impeccable. But you aren't going stop me because...time...will keep slipping for you. You won't be able to shine a light on this one, with the tube guiding the way."

Suddenly, a blast hit the UN building, causing the place to shake. Carmen slipped out the window, with the award in hand. Her grappling hook attached to her ship, a flying car of sorts. It had been clearly repurposed with parts from the Planet Express ship. All the documents on display were sucked up into the ship, using a huge tube, almost like a hose on a vacuum. Before she could speed away, Leela used her Wristlojackimator to fire a tracking device onto Carmen's ship. It not tracked the ship's GPS location but its location through time.

Carmen disappeared with a flash of light. There was yet another spacetime disruption, even worse than the first one. All the screens disappeared, like an apparition, including the Chief, and the screen on Leela's Wristlojackimator.

Prof. Farnsworth exclaims, "It's the television! All the TV screens are gone! The original television, created by my ancestor, Philo Farnsworth, must have been stolen by Carmen Sandiego. We have to stop her!"

Ivy, thinking about it a little more, has an a-ha moment. She told the Professor, "That must be what her clue meant when she was leaving the U.N building, when she escaped her clutches!"

Leela responded, with her Wristlojackimator, which had become an earpiece. "I tracked her to San Francisco California, by the Golden Gate bridge.'

Taking that to heart, Zack says, "Player, C5 us to San Francisco!'

The whole group arrived in San Francisco, at the spot where Carmen used to live as an orphan. This was not a trip down memory lane. Rather, it was a building called "The Carmen Sandiego Hall of Wonders."

Ivy realized what has happened. She told them all, "I know why Carmen stole all those artifacts. She wanted to have her own museum, with herself as the curator!"

The whole crew walked into this tiny museum and found an early television, original copies of U.S. Constitution and U.N. Charter, James Madison's diaries about the Constitutional Convention, the NATO founding document, and many other artifacts, on display. Museum's front doors closed behind them. Carmen welcomed them and began showing them around. If anything, she always knew how to be an amazing hostess.

Zack, shined a flashlight in her face. He angrily declared: "Your time is up Carmen. It's time to shine a light on your misdeeds!"

Prof. Farnsworth, then added, "Stop messing with my ancestors! Get her!"

After being temporarily blinded, Carmen said with a smile (like a Cheshire Cat), "As much as I'd like to stay and join in the fun, your time is up. Sayonara!"

Ivy, with a degree of familiarity, exclaimed, "She's getting away again!"

Leela, now fully on the side of the ACME agents, having forgotten her previous dislike of them, declared "Oh no you don't, le femme rouge! You won't escape on my watch!" She fired her gun at Carmen's grappling hook, which was attached to her ship. Although the rope snapped, Carmen got away on her hang glider, which was fitted with rockets.

Zack, said, with a dismal sigh, "Well, at least we got everything back she stole. Now we just have to fix the timeline and prevent this entire crime from happening!"

With newfound confidence, Fry said "Me and Bender will go back to 1787 and return the stolen documents from Constitution Hall, since my ancestor lived in that time after all."

Leela then added, "I'll go back with Prof. Farnsworth to make sure she doesn't steal that TV."

Following that, Ivy remarked, "Me and Zack can stop her from stealing from the U.N. building. We will all meet at ACME headquarters tomorrow morning."

The next day beckoned. They meet together once more. Everything had been returned to its rightful historical place.

Ivy, thinking back to what started this mess, asked, "There's one thing I don't get? Why were her guards stealing uranium from Los Alamos? What did she steal from the past other than those constitutional documents?"

Responding to Ivy, the Chief chuckled. "Well, gumshoes, although she didn't steal anything other than those few documents, she used an explosive of some kind, one that I've never seen! The stealing of the uranium from Los Alamos, which you both foiled, was just a distraction...so we'd look in the wrong direction."

Prof. Farnsworth had a realization. "That's it, it must have been the Spheroboom! If that device is the hands of anyone other than a mad scientist like me," he said, as he cackled devilishly, "who knows what they would do with it!"

Thinking back, Leela adds, "I remember how, when we fought those scammer aliens, we fired it from the Planet Express ship, thanks to Bender's switcharoo, and destroyed them. That must be where she stole it from. We'll get it back and stop her. You can count on us.'

Saying with a tinge of sorrow at their departure, but glee that the mission is done, the Chief added, "Well, Zack and Ivy can accompany you to 3011, and everything can go back to normal."

Thinking it over, Fry responds in jest: "Thanks for the offer Chief...but I feel comfortable going on our own, we don't need you both to accompany us. We trust you now and hope you feel the same.."

In response, the Chief hands Fry the device, adding, "here is a Chronoskimmer which only goes forward in time...to May 1, 3011, so you can all return to your time. Let us know if you ever see Carmen Sandiego in your time, by using this cross-dimensional communication device. There will be no grandfather paradoxes with this device."

The Planet Express crew quickly said their goodbyes, and sped away to the future, to the year 3011.

As soon as they left, Zack, said sheepishly, "Sis, it didn't turn out all bad...You know, if Leela had lived in the present, and didn't have a boyfriend, perhaps I would have asked her out"

Laughing with indignation, Ivy tells him, "Oh, little bro, you have so much to learn about women, but...I still love you anyway." She then lovingly gave Zack a noogie on the head. She wanted to discourage him, since she guessed the large age gap between Leela and her brother. It would be far too large for a healthy relationship, since her brother was only 18. She wasn't aware that Leela was over 40. If she had known, it would have strengthened her resolve and conviction in more ways than one.

As they both faded away, Player typed "Carmen, you were foiled once again and don't know how to handle time. Next time I'll nab you, Carmen."

Carmen typed back. "Player, it's about the thrill of the game, a challenge to steal what others can't. And unlike you, I have all the time in the world...see you next crime!"

THE END.

Chapter End Notes

Also note this is set after the Futurama episode, Meanwhile, the last episode of the animated sitcom that aired. It also takes some inspiration from the Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego episode when she travels to the future to steal an item but is first hailed as a hero. The flying car of sorts is used in the second season of 'Where on Earth is Carmen Sandiego?' (A Date with Carmen Part 1, A Date with Carmen Part 2).

End Notes

Some of the dialogue, for Ivy, Zack, the Chief, and Carmen are inspired by lines from the last three episodes of the 'Where on Earth is Carmen Sandiego' series, titled Cupid Sandiego, Can You Ever Go Home Again? (Part I), and Can You Ever Go Home Again? (Part II). Part of the plot is also inspired by the episode 'Timing is Everything' where Carmen is hailed as a hero by people in the future, which I thought was a worthwhile topic. For the characters from the 'Futurama' universe, I've taken inspiration from the dialogue from the last few Futurama episodes (Murder on the Planet Express, Stench and Stenchibility, and Meanwhile), using the transcripts on Infosphere, so that the characters sound like they would have in the show itself. The "Goodbye, Waking World" line is actually one uttered by Leela in The Sting, but knowing the show very well, it came to my mind when writing this story. I took some liberty with dates in the 'Futurama' universe, as the date of the battle with the Nudist scammers is not known, and neither are other dates. I did the same for dates in the 'Where on Earth is Carmen Sandiego' universe as well, as no exact dates of the last season of the show are ever firmly established. For other facts, I took information from the Mission page of the Los Alamos National Laboratory. I hope I didn't make Carmen too evil. The time machine Carmen uses in this story was last featured in the 'Where on Earth is Carmen Sandiego' series in the episode "Timing is Everything," just so people know what I am referring to in this story.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!